

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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-----122207 290903Z /12

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
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USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY ROME
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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: US-FRENCH SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL
EXCHANGES: HAVE THEY SERIOUSLY DECLINED?

REF: STATE 67701

1. SUMMARY. THE REFTEL'S CUPFUL OF QUESTIONS HAS BEEN RETURNED WITH THE FOLLOWING FIRE HYDRANT RESPONSE. IF THE NAS WANTS TO DEVELOP THE THESIS THAT FEWER AMERICAN SCIENTISTS ARE TRAVELING TO EUROPE, OUR RESPONSE MUST BE YES, THERE IS A REDUCTION IN SUCH TRAVEL. HOWEVER, THE HEALTH OF US/EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC RELATIONS IS NOT THEREFORE INJURED. A MORE THOROUGH STUDY OF THE TOTALITY OF US-EUROPEAN (FRENCH) S&T INTERCHANGE IS WARRANTED AND A PRACTICAL APPROACH HAS BEEN OUTLINED. THE GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT ASPECTS HAVE ALSO BEEN ADDRESSED AND A PROPOSAL TO INITIATE ACTION IN THIS AREA HAS BEEN BRIEFLY OUTLINED. END SUMMARY.

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2. AFTER WORLD WAR II AND INTO THE EARLY SIXTIES THE USG SUPPORTED EXCHANGES WITH EUROPE IN MANY SCIENTIFIC FIELDS; THE US AGENCIES PAID FOR US SCIENTISTS TO GO TO EUROPE AND VARIOUS USG FUNDS (E.G., FULBRIGHT) PAID FOR EUROPEANS TO GO TO THE US. THIS SUPPORT, TOGETHER WITH US TECHNICAL AGENCY DIRECT SUPPORT OF

RESEARCH PERFORMED IN EUROPE, CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO PUTTING WAR-TORN EUROPEAN SCIENCE BACK ON ITS FEET. TODAY'S SENIOR POLICY LEVEL FRENCH GOVERNMENT SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS GREW UP PROFESSIONALLY IN THAT ATMOSPHERE AND AS A CONSEQUENCE ARE WELL TUNED TO TODAY'S US TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS AND ACTIVITIES AND HAVE A FEELING FOR THE EVOLUTION OF US SCIENCE.

3. THE "GOLD FLOW" ISSUE IN THE EARLY AND MID-SIXTIES SQUEEZED ALMOST TO ZERO THE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR DIRECT SUPPORT OF OVERSEAS RESEARCH, TOOK A BIG BITE INTO TRAVEL OVERSEAS OF US SCIENTISTS AND CLOSED OUT THE FEW REMAINING SOURCES OF US FUNDS FOR EUROPEAN SCIENTISTS TO VISIT THE US. THE GROWING STRENGTH OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMY HELPED FORCE THE US "GOLD FLOW" PROBLEM AND ALSO PROVIDED THE BASE FOR EUROPEAN FUNDS FOR EUROPEAN SCIENTISTS' TRAVEL TO THE US AND TO SUPPORT SOME AMERICANS STUDYING IN EUROPE.

4. WHILE NO SPECIFIC DATA ARE AVAILABLE, THE CONSENSUS OF FRENCH SENIOR SCIENCE ADMINISTRATORS IS THE FOLLOWING. THERE HAS BEEN A SIZEABLE DECREASE IN US SCIENTISTS VISITING FRANCE FOR SHORT VISITS AS WELL AS THE LONGER PERIODS. THERE HAS BEEN A MOST IMPRESSIVE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF FRENCH SCIENTISTS VISITING THE US - PERHAPS NOT BALANCING THE DECLINE IN US UNCLASSIFIED

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VISITORS, BUT WITHIN THE SAME ORDER OF MAGNITUDE. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE US, THE QUESTION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHETHER THE US HAS LOST IN THIS CHANGE OF CONDITIONS. OUR VIEW IS THAT WHILE THIS CHANGE HAS HELPED IMPROVE EUROPE'S (FRANCE'S) COMPETITIVE POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE US, THE RESULTANT INCREASE IN EUROPEAN CAPABILITY HAS HELPED STIMULATE US SCIENTISTS AS WELL AS US TECHNOLOGISTS. IN SHORT, WE HAVE ALL BEEN HELPED.

5. IN THE MOST RECENT FEW YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN A GRADUAL CONTRACTION IN FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, IN THE US AS WELL AS IN MOST ADVANCED WESTERN COUNTRIES (E.G., FRANCE). THIS HAS GRADUALLY REDUCED THE TOTAL EXCHANGE FORCING THE LESS USEFUL VISITS TO BE DROPPED AND PLACING MORE EMPHASIS ON THE MUTUAL ADVANTAGES TO BE GAINED IN EACH VISIT. THE RESULT IS HEALTHY FOR INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND A NORMAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE DEMISE OF THE HONEYMOON OF SCIENCE. THIS CONTRACTION OF REAL FUNDS FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BRINGS TO THE FOREGROUND THE QUESTION FROM THE GOVERNMENT PURSEKEEPER - WHAT CAN YOUR REQUESTED SUPPORT FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY LEAD TO

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THAT WILL HELP MEET SOCIETY'S NEEDS? THIS QUESTION
PERVADES FRENCH R&D BUDGET REVIEWS AS IT DOES IN THE
US AND IN OTHER COUNTRIES. FOR THE US, THE CHANGE THAT
IS NEEDED AT THIS POINT IS TO REVISE THE MODE OF INTER-
NATIONAL COOPERATION IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FROM ONE
OF DOING INTERESTING AND USEFUL BUT MARGINAL PROJECTS
FUNDABLE WITHIN EXISTING AND PROJECTED SHORT-TERM
AGENCY BUDGETS TO A MODE OF COORDINATING
LONG-TERM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ON MUTUALLY AGREED
PROJECTS AND ACCEPTING THESE COMMITMENTS AS A PRIORITY
AND NON-DELETABLE PART OF FUTURE BUDGETS.

6. FOOTNOTE - IT ALWAYS COSTS MORE TO DO A PIECE OF
RESEARCH INTERNATIONALLY THAN TO DO IT NATIONALLY;
TRAVEL, COORDINATION AND TIME ADD TO THE COST. ASSUME
A 100 DOLLAR RESEARCH PROJECT COULD BE DONE INTERNA-
TIONALLY FOR 140 DOLLARS. EACH OF TWO GOVERNMENTS PUT
IN 70 DOLLARS - LESS MONEY THAN EITHER WOULD PAY TO DO
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IT ALONE - AND BOTH RECEIVE 100 DOLLARS WORTH OF KNOWLEDGE FROM THE PROJECT. ALMOST EVERYONE BENEFITS: EACH SIDE GETS THE SAME KNOWLEDGE FOR LESS MONEY, THE QUALITY OF SCIENCE IS PROBABLY IMPROVED THROUGH THE STIMULATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS, BUT IN EACH COUNTRY THERE IS LESS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY EMPLOYED THAN IF THE ORIGINAL 100 DOLLARS HAD BEEN SPENT IN EACH COUNTRY.

7. FROM THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC VIEW, THE RECENT REDUCTION IN FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HAS A MIXED RESULT WHICH ON SUM IS HEALTHY. FRANCE HAS HAD TO CHOOSE WHERE IT SPENDS ITS SCARCE FUNDS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND IT HAS CLEARLY CHOSEN TO STAY VERY CLOSE TO THE US (WHILE AT THE SAME TIME NOT WALKING AWAY FROM ITS EUROPEAN PARTNERS). THE FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTRY FUNDS ALL REGULARLY SCHEDULED VISITS AND MEETINGS FOR FRENCH TECHNICAL AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE US-FRENCH SCIENCE COOPERATION PROGRAM TO INSURE THAT SOME DOMESTIC BUDGET SQUEEZE DOES NOT JEOPARDIZE THE PROGRAMS OVER THE NEXT YEAR. THE FRENCH NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH ENCOURAGES AND SUPPORTS ITS RESEARCHERS FOR A MINIMUM OF TWO WEEKS PER YEAR TRAVEL TO THE US. FRANCE HAS PURPOSELY ENTERED INTO MULTIMILLION DOLLAR LONG-TERM COOPERATION WITH WESTINGHOUSE IN NUCLEAR REACTOR RESEARCH AND WITH HONEYWELL IN COMPUTER RESEARCH. IN REQUESTING PROJECT FUNDS FRENCH TECHNICAL AGENCIES CAN ENHANCE THEIR ARGUMENT BY SHOWING THAT SOME COOPERATION WITH THE US IS PLANNED. THESE TIES, THE FRENCH HOPE, WILL BRING GREATER S&T INTERDEPENDENCE.

8. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE COOPERATION IN THE TECHNOLOGY UNCLASSIFIED

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END OF THE SPECTRUM IS CHALLENGED BY THE DESIRE TO EXTRACT ALL POSSIBLE BENEFIT FOR FRANCE FROM ANY RESULTING PATENTS OR COMMERCIALY EXPLOITABLE KNOWLEDGE. US-FRENCH VIEWS ON THE POLITICS OF NON-PROLIFERATION ARE VERY CLOSE, BUT DIFFERENCES DEVELOP WHEN EXISTING FRENCH NUCLEAR INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY IS CHALLENGED. FRENCH EFFORTS TO CAPTURE SOME LEADERSHIP IN THE AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY (I.E., CONCORDE) HAS MET WITH INCOMPREHENSIBLE (TO THE FRENCH) OPPOSITION BY THE US. AS THE QUALITY OF US AND FRENCH SCIENCE AND PARTICULARLY TECHNOLOGY GROWS CLOSER, A NATURAL BY-PRODUCT OF HEALTHY US-EUROPEAN SCIENTIFIC RELATIONS, CONTINUED STRESS WILL

EXIST IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE. LONG-TERM COOPERATION IN R&D BETWEEN US AND FRANCE SHOULD HELP DEFUSE POTENTIALLY SERIOUS AND SIGNIFICANTLY DISRUPTIVE DISAGREEMENTS WHILE MAINTAINING THE ECONOMIC COMPETITION THAT STIMULATES IMPROVEMENTS IN TECHNOLOGIES.

9. WITH WESTERN EUROPEAN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY BECOMING MORE SOPHISTICATED AND THOSE COUNTRIES GROWING MORE UNITED, IT IS MOST NECESSARY THAT THE US - GOVERNMENT AND SCIENCE COMMUNITY - TAKE A HARD LOOK AT FUTURE S&T RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE. COMMON MARKET COUNTRIES ARE LEARNING TO COOPERATE ON LONG-TERM R&D PROJECTS (ALBEIT THROUGH THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS, SUCH AS JET) WHILE THE US CONTINUES TO TREAT INTERNATIONAL R&D COOPERATION AS MARGINAL TO ITS DOMESTIC PROGRAMS. THERE ARE TWO ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE UNDERTAKEN THAT WOULD GIVE THE US (1) A CLEARER PICTURE ON THE TOTAL FLUX OF S&T INTERCHANGE, AND (2) EXPERIENCE IN LONG-TERM R&D COOPERATION. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE NAS IS THE PROPOSAL, WHICH HAS BEEN INFORMALLY DISCUSSED DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, TO

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ESTABLISH A SMALL CENTER - POSSIBLY IN PARIS OR SOME

OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN CAPITAL - WHICH WOULD UNDERTAKE A TWO OR THREE-YEAR STUDY OF THE TOTAL EXCHANGE OF S&T (ESPECIALLY NONGOVERNMENTAL SECTORS) BETWEEN THE US AND FRANCE (IF IN PARIS) AND/OR WESTERN EUROPE. (EXCHANGES REFERS TO ALL FORMS OF INTERCHANGE OF PEOPLE AND IDEAS.) AT THE SAME TIME THE CENTER COULD HELP INCREASE THE USEFULNESS OF ONGOING EXCHANGES, HELP NEW ONES DEVELOP AND ACT AS A "SWITCHBOARD" FOR CONNECTING COMMON INTERESTS. THIS ASSISTANCE TO EXCHANGES WOULD REINFORCE THE EFFORT TO DEVELOP DATA AND WOULD LEAD TO SOME INSIGHT INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VARIOUS EXCHANGES. A TWO OR THREE-YEAR EFFORT SHOULD YIELD A SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS GOING ON AND BETTER SERVE THE NAS IN ITS WORK IN THIS FIELD. THIS PROPOSAL HAS BEEN BRIEFLY AND ORALLY DISCUSSED AND HAS RECEIVED SOME INTEREST FROM A FEW OFFICIALS IN INTERNATIONAL CORPORATIONS, INTERNA-
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TIONAL FUNDS AND THE NSF.

10. OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE USG IS THE PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP LONG-TERM R&D COOPERATION. IT WOULD BE MORE PRACTICAL TO INITIATE SUCH AN EFFORT WITH ONE OR TWO COUNTRIES IN A VERY LIMITED FIELD. (NOTE - COOPERATION OF THIS NATURE DOES EXIST TO SOME DEGREE IN THE FIELD OF HIGH ENERGY PHYSICS, BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE HIGH COST OF EQUIPMENT, NOT BY THE PROCESS PROPOSED HERE.) ONE MEANS OF GETTING SUCH AN EFFORT STARTED IS TO ORGANIZE A MEETING OF TWO TO THREE DAYS OF SENIOR GOVERNMENT POLICY OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THOSE IN THE CANDIDATE FIELD(S), TO DISCUSS THE MUTUAL INTERESTS AND AGREEABLE WAYS TO PROCEED. THIS APPROACH HAS BEEN BRIEFLY DISCUSSED WITH A FEW FRENCH OFFICIALS WHO HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN PROCEEDING FURTHER WITH THE IDEA.

11. WE WOULD WELCOME THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTIONS TO THESE TWO PROPOSALS. WE WOULD ALSO WELCOME FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE EFFORTS OF THE NRC BOARD ON INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES AND ITS, AS WELL AS THE DEPARTMENT'S, REACTIONS TO THE CABLES SENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REFTEL.

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Message Attributes

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